

## The Scientific Reality of Human Languages

### Directly observable facts

This set of 11 sentences is an attempt to establish the directly observable facts that form an important background for describing and analysing languages.

1. Language is not a thing (a Ding-an-sich, in Philosophy), but an activity.
2. The activity of language produces sentences, none of which are ever identical; each sentence has its own space-time identity (context of situation). Each sentence is the product of an act of language.
3. It is important to distinguish the mass noun *language* (the activity) from the count noun *a language* (a mental entity accessible to brain surgeons): see 11 below.
4. Languages are learned by very small children, normally in the first three years of life.
5. The personal language, that each individual learns as a child, is a variant of a community language with a minimum of three parts of speech: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary.
6. The Primaries, Secondaries, and Tertiaries common to human languages are typically nominals, verbs, and adverbs.
7. Pronouns (including articles), and adjectives are included in the category of nominal, prepositions in the category of adverb.
8. The subcategories of the noun are typically Number, Gender, and Case.
9. The agreement categories of the verb are normally Person, and Number. The grammatical categories of the verb are typically Tense, Aspect, Mood, and Voice.
10. Languages are learned naturally by infants in three stages: the one-element stage (6-18 months); the two-element stage (12-24 months); the three-element stage (18-30 months), as initially outlined by Robert M. Jones, *System in Child Language* (1970).
11. The language of each individual is stored in the cortex of the brain, accessible to brain surgery. (Penfield, Wilder and Lamar Roberts. 1959. *Speech and Brain Mechanisms*. Princeton University Press)

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